

# PubPol 590

## Public Affairs Leadership and Management

### Syllabus

Rusty Hills

Monday, 4:00 to 6:50 p.m.

1220 Weill Hall (Max & Marjorie Fisher Classroom)

Professor Hills' contact information

Phone: (517) 648-2520

E-mail: [rustyhills@gmail.com](mailto:rustyhills@gmail.com)

Office Hours: By appointment, Room 5303; Preferably before or after class.

In addition, Carrie Hammerman, the Organizational Development Director for NEW, a partner to nonprofit organizations, will serve as a consultant on two classes.

#### **Course Overview:**

Trust in government as measured by polling is at an all-time low. The need for leadership has never been greater. Nor have the challenges to effective leadership. Increasing partisan divides, fractured media and gridlock at the federal, state and local levels threaten to make a difficult situation even more challenging.

But as World War II Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower said in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge, this is a great opportunity. The purpose of PubPol 590, Public Affairs Leadership and Management, is to empower you with the skills to make a positive difference in government and the non-profit sector.

Here you will grapple with real world situations and challenges. You will work, individually and as part of a team, to resolve these complex issues. In the process, you will learn how to govern and achieve results. Leadership and management can be learned. And they must be learned, and applied, in order to implement change and reform in government, non-profits and the public sector in order to make them work, and work better.

#### **Course Objectives:**

PubPol 590, Public Affairs Leadership and Management, will equip students with a set of powerful tools to perform in the public sector, making for more effective and efficient governance. Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

- Have a greater appreciation for the complexity of government and non-profits, the number of actors that influence decisions and the difficulties of translating campaign promises into fully functioning government programs;
- Learn the importance of decision-making and timeliness;
- Experiment with negotiation strategies to resolve conflicts;
- Communicate clearly through effective writing, individually and as a member of a team, and through the creation of communications plans for government and/or non-profit agencies and/or policies;
- Cultivate an appreciation for the power of listening and how that can be an important component of a communications strategy;
- Contribute to and assist in the management of a team, identifying problems and selecting public policy solutions, combined with implementation strategies;
- Understand the interplay between politics and public service;
- Grapple with organizational performance and the interplay between elected officials (transitory) and civil servants (permanent);
- Think deeply about organizational change management and how to effect change in large-scale bureaucracies;
- Increase your capacity to learn and adapt in the midst of short-term and long-term issues and challenges;
- Develop self-awareness.

## ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Class participation.** Come to class. Be prepared. Read about current events. Participate and discuss.
2. **Read** and be prepared to discuss the book titled “A Passion for Leadership” by Robert Gates.
3. **Other assigned readings.** Throughout the course, readings specific to the topics at hand will be distributed on the course site or as handouts in class.
4. **Book Review** (6 pages). A book review on a book of your choice that discusses leadership. (6 pages, double-spaced.). The book can be explicitly on leadership or not. Bookshelves are groaning with tomes on leadership today, some good, much of it bad. Conversely, there is much to be learned about leadership from biographies and other non-fiction works. Choose wisely. The book review must contain the following elements:
  - a. A description of the essential message of the book;
  - b. What you liked about the book;
  - c. What you disliked about the book;
  - d. Whether I should buy and/or read the book, and why or why not.
5. **Memo to the Professor** (10 pages max). A memo to me on leadership actions taken by one of our Presidents, successfully or unsuccessfully. (8 pages, double-spaced.) The memo will consist of the following elements: 1.) an explanation of the issue/problem; 2.) the action the President took; 3.) why

those actions did or did not work; 4) Lesson(s) learned. Examples include: President Lyndon Johnson on Vietnam or passage of the Civil Rights Act; President George W. Bush responding to 9/11; President Obama on the Affordable Care Act; President Clinton on passage of welfare-to-work. (10 pages maximum, double-spaced.)

6. **A second Memo to the Professor** (12 pages max). Focus on one government agency, department or institution, at the local, state or federal level. Examine how that agency, cabinet or administration dealt with one issue/decision/crisis, either successfully or unsuccessfully. Explain why or why not the issue was resolved, the impact or failure of leadership in this particular instance, and, finally, lessons to be learned that can be broadly applied to future such issues.

Examples include: FEMA and its response to Hurricane Katrina, or Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality and its response to the Flint Water Crisis.

7. **Final Project, Team Report** (16 pages maximum, double-spaced). A team report in the form of a memo to the professor. Each team must meet and decide the issue to be analyzed, and the issue must be discussed and approved by me.

The report will examine one current issue, and apply the lessons of PubPol 590 (coalition-building, communications, use of scarce resources, the application of leadership, etc.) in recommending a course of action to make progress in resolving the issue at hand. DO NOT write me a memo on World Peace. Keep the project targeted, focused and manageable. For example, one report could explain how to deal with the issue of homelessness in the city of Los Angeles. Or, the removal of blighted housing in Detroit. Or, the improvement of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading in Michigan. Or, a proposal to improve road conditions in Michigan. Or, one neighborhood revitalization program for a neighborhood in Flint, Detroit, or the City of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Or a pilot program how to reduce opioid deaths, suicides or other deaths of despair in one geographic area. (16 pages maximum, double-spaced.)

8. Grade weights:
  - a. Class Participation, 10%.
  - b. Book review, 20%.
  - c. First Memo, 20%.
  - d. Second Memo, 20%.
  - e. Final Project, Team Report, 30%.

**Help with Writing:** We are blessed to have an outstanding Writing Center at the Ford School, and I would encourage students to take advantage of all the services that the Center offers. For more information, I would direct you to

[www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/](http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/writing-center/)

**Required Texts:** “A Passion for Leadership,” by Robert M. Gates.

In addition, class will also draw upon real-world examples drawn from the pages of the day’s news. Thus, it would be wise to regularly read The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, the Washington Post and online aggregators and publishers of news and information regarding government, non-profits and the public sector.

**Class Format:** The class will combine lecture with discussion, supplemented with guest lecturers.

**Course Requirements:** Class participation will be a portion of your final grade. Attendance is required and will be taken in class. Students are expected to arrive on time, finish assignments on time, be prepared for the weekly discussions and topics, participate in discussions, AND be respectful of the opinions of all other students and guests.

NOTE: Even if you miss a class, **all assignments are still due on the date assigned.**

What does that mean? Your grade will be lowered for each class period that an assignment is not handed in. In other words, missing a class is not an excuse for failing to complete an assignment.

## **Ford School of Public Policy Inclusivity Statement**

Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community

## **Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources**

The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained

relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impacts students' academic performance.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) and/or [University Health Service](#) (UHS). For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit: <http://umich.edu/~mhealth/>.

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please let your instructor know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of courses may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make your instructor aware of your needs, they can work with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

Please review additional information and policies regarding academic expectations and resources at the Ford School of Public Policy at this link:

<http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectation>

**Grading:** Students will be graded on class participation and the successful, on-time completion of the four individual assignments: essay, speech, book review and Memo to the Candidate.

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.7	93-90
B+	3.3	89-86
B	3.0	85-80
B-	2.7	79-75
C+	2.3	74-70
C	2.0	69-64
D+	1.3	59-56
D	1.0	55-52
D-	0.7	51-50
E	0.0	Less than 50

**Plagiarism:** This is a serious violation of our high academic standards at the University of Michigan, and is cause for failing the course.

## TOPIC SCHEDULE\*

### January 13

#### Class Overview

A review of the course, its purpose and goals. Review of expectations and assignments. Questions answered.

#### Assignment # 1:

**Book Review** (6 pages, double-spaced). A book review on a book of your choice that discusses leadership. (6 pages, double-spaced.). The book can be explicitly on leadership or not. Bookshelves are groaning with tomes on leadership today, some good, much of it bad. Conversely, there is much to be learned about leadership from biographies and other non-fiction works.

Choose wisely. The book review must contain the following elements:

- f. A description of the essential message of the book;
- g. What you liked about the book;
- h. What you disliked about the book;
- i. Whether I should buy and/or read the book, and why or why not.

Due Date: February 3

### January 20

#### Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed

No class

### January 27

#### Vision, Priorities, Focus

What is the core function of an administration, non-profit or public agency? How to maintain focus and priorities in the midst of daily distractions, controversies and crises.

### February 3

#### Allies & Enemies, Environment and coalition-building

Legendary Michigan Coach Bo Schembechler famously said, "The team, the team, the team." Governing is not an individual sport, and to accomplish great purposes

takes great teams. How is that done? What is involved in the care and feeding of allies and coalitions? What if different members have different goals or expectations?

**Assignment # 1 is due.**

**Assignment # 2:**

**Memo to the Professor** (10 pages max). A memo to me on leadership actions taken by one of our Presidents, successfully or unsuccessfully. (8 pages, double-spaced.) The memo will consist of the following elements: 1.) an explanation of the issue/problem; 2.) the action the President took; 3.) why those actions did or did not work; 4) Lesson(s) learned. Examples include: President Lyndon Johnson on Vietnam or passage of the Civil Rights Act; President George W. Bush responding to 9/11; President Obama on the Affordable Care Act; President Clinton on passage of welfare-to-work. (10 pages maximum, double-spaced.)

Due Date: February 24

**February 10**

**The Bully Pulpit – Communications. Internal, External, Crisis.** Once a vision, focus or priority has been established, how is that communicated, internally to employees and externally to stakeholders and allies? When a crisis occurs (and they always do), what is the communications strategy to deal with that?

**February 17 (Presidents' Day)**

**Constituencies – Supporters, Voters, Employees, Donors, Special Interests.**

Who, exactly, are you working for? All citizens? Those affected by your agency? The voters who put you in office? The person who hired you? A broader moral purpose? The public interest? The elected officials' donors? The employees in the agency itself? And if those interests diverge, then what? Who decides, and how is that handled?

**February 24**

**Negotiations, Conflict, Resolution.**

Suppose 100% of the people do not agree with 100% of your goals? Then what? How is change handled internally in an agency? What if you break with constituents or a key ally? How do you resolve issues and live to fight another day?

Assignment # 2 is due.

Assignment #3:

**A second Memo to the Professor** (12 pages max). Focus on one government agency, department or institution, at the local, state or federal level. Examine how that agency, cabinet or administration dealt with one issue/decision/crisis, either successfully or unsuccessfully. Explain why or why not the issue was resolved, the impact or failure of leadership in this particular instance, and, finally, lessons to be learned that can be broadly applied to future such issues.

Examples include: FEMA and its response to Hurricane Katrina, or Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality and its response to the Flint Water Crisis.

Due Date: March 23

March 2

Spring Break

No class

March 9

**Strategic Direction, Carrie Hammerman**

Discovering, defining, and guiding the strategic direction for an organization are critical components to strong leadership. Through examination of fundamental questions, this class will explore the journey from the development of strategy through effective implementation and integration into operations.

March 16

**Personnel, People and Team-Building, Carrie Hammerman**

Building and leading strong teams is dependent on the understanding of what draws people in and what keeps them motivated to return each and every day. This class will focus on the development of effective teams and the role of leaders in guiding these teams to achieve individual and organizational goals.

March 23

**Time Management and Scheduling**

Time cannot be increased or manufactured, so what is the best way to use time and maximize your schedule?

Assignment # 3 is due.

Assignment # 4:

**Final Project, Team Report** (16 pages maximum, double-spaced). A team report in the form of a memo to the professor. Each team must meet and decide the issue to be analyzed, and the issue must be discussed and approved by me.

The report will examine one current issue, and apply the lessons of PubPol 590 (coalition-building, communications, use of scarce resources, the application of leadership, etc.) in recommending a course of action to make progress in resolving the issue at hand. **DO NOT** write me a memo on World Peace. Keep the project targeted, focused and manageable. For example, one report could explain how to deal with the issue of homelessness in the city of Los Angeles. Or, the removal of blighted housing in Detroit. Or, the improvement of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading in Michigan. Or, a proposal to improve road conditions in Michigan. Or, one neighborhood revitalization program for a neighborhood in Flint, Detroit, or the City of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Or a pilot program how to reduce opioid deaths, suicides or other deaths of despair in one geographic area. (16 pages maximum, double-spaced.)

Due Date: April 20

March 30

**Budgets, Resources, Money.**

There is never enough money, never enough time, never enough people to accomplish all your agency's tasks and goals. So how are scarce resources allocated?

April 6

**Executive, Legislative, Judicial Leadership**

Examples of leadership in action in the three branches of government. How does management and leadership differ among the three branches?

April 13

**The Permanent Campaign**

With the advent of social & digital media, and the lengthening of campaign cycles, there is a case to be made that we have entered the era of permanent campaigning. What effect does constant campaigning have on government, and can any of the ill effects be mitigated?

April 20

## Lessons Learned

A look back at more than 40 years of public service, and lessons learned from successes and failures in the public sector.

Assignment # 4 is due.